

U.S. Appln. S.N. 09/913,643  
AMENDMENT AFTER FINAL REJECTION

PATENT

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 20-23 and rewrite claims 16, 18, 30 and 32, as shown below in the detailed listing of all claims which are, or were, in this application:

Claims 1-15 (canceled).

16. (Currently amended) ~~A method for adjusting a biodegradation rate of a silica fibre spun from a silica sol, wherein the method comprises adjusting the biodegradation rate by~~ The method of claim 34, further comprising controlling the viscosity of the spinning silica sol wherefrom the fibre is spun, wherein a viscosity of the spinning silica sol is from about 1 000 to below 100 000 mPas, such that fibres derived from sols having low viscosity during the spinning process degrade more slowly than fibres derived from sols prepared at a higher spinning viscosity.

17. (Canceled).

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18. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 16 wherein the viscosity of the spinning silica sol is from about 1 000 to about 50 000 mPas.

19. (Original) The method according to claim 18 wherein the viscosity of the spinning sol is from about 2 000 to about 15 000 mPas.

Claims 20-23 (Canceled)

24. (Previously presented) A delivery device comprising the controllably biodegradable fibre according to claim 30, wherein the fibre contains a biologically active agent.

25. (Original) The delivery device according to claim 24, wherein said biologically active agent is a medicine, a protein, a hormone, a living or dead cell, a bacteria, a virus or a part thereof.

26. (Original) The delivery device according to claim 25, wherein said biologically active agent is a medicine.

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27. (Previously presented) A pharmaceutical preparation comprising a delivery device according to claim 24.

28. (Previously presented) A method for administering a biologically active agent to a human or animal, wherein said method comprises implanting, injecting or mucosally attaching a delivery device, wherein said delivery device comprises a controllably biodegradable fibre according to claim 30 and wherein the fibre comprises a biologically active agent.

29. (Original) The method according to claim 28, wherein the biologically active agent is administered into a mammal.

30. (Currently amended) A controllably biodegradable silica fibre spun from silica sol, a biodegradation rate of said fibre being adjusted by controlling the starting point of the spinning process by a viscosity of the silica sol wherefrom the fibre is spun, the solubility of the said fibre having a solubility in simulated body fluid being of 0.2 to 20 wt-%/h.

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31. (Previously presented) A controllably biodegradable silica fibre according to claim 30, the solubility of the fibre in simulated body fluid being 0.2 to 8.5 wt-%/h.

32. (Currently amended) A controllably biodegradable silica fibre spun from a silica sol, a biodegradation rate of the fibre being adjusted by controlling the viscosity of the spinning sol wherefrom the fibre is spun, ~~the solubility of the said fibre having a~~ solubility in simulated body fluid being of 0.2 to 20 wt-%/h.

33. (Previously presented) A controllably biodegradable silica fibre according to claim 32, the solubility of the fibre in simulated body fluid being 0.2 to 8.5 wt-%/h.

34. (Previously presented) A method for preparing a biodegradable silica fibre, comprising

correlating a desired biodegradability of a silica fibre with a viscosity of a silica sol;

preparing a silica sol, and

spinning a fibre from said silica sol,

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wherein the spinning process is begun when the viscosity of the silica sol reaches a value correlating to said desired biodegradability of the silica fiber.